A/69/41

United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

General Assembly

Official Records
Sixty-ninth session
Supplement No. 41 (A/69/41)

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Report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

United Nations • New York, 2014

Note

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I. Organizational and other matters

A. States parties to the Convention

1. As at 31 January 2014, the closing date of the sixty-fifth session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, there were 193 States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This makes it the most widely ratified human rights instrument, with almost universal ratification. It is also the human rights instrument with the highest number of reservations, although a few countries withdrew their reservations during the period under consideration in the present report (4 February 2012–31 January 2014). An updated list of States that have signed, ratified or acceded to the Convention can be consulted at www.ohchr.org or http://treaties.un.org.

2. As at the same date, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict had been ratified or acceded to by 153 States parties, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography had been ratified or acceded to by 166 States parties.

3. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2011, was opened for signature on 28 February 2012; as at 31 January 2014 it had been ratified by 10 States. It will enter into force on 14 April 2014, three months after the deposit of the tenth instrument of ratification or accession, in accordance with article 19, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol. An updated list of States that have signed, ratified or acceded to the three Optional Protocols can be consulted at www.ohchr.org or http://treaties.un.org.

B. Sessions of the Committee

4. The Committee held six sessions since the adoption of its previous biennial report:[1] the sixtieth session (29 May–15 June 2012), sixty-first session (17 September–5 October 2012), sixty-second session (14 January–1 February 2013), sixty-third session (27 May–14 June 2013), sixty-fourth session (16 September–4 October 2013) and sixty-fifth session (13–31 January 2014). Subsequent to each session, the Committee makes public all concluding observations adopted, as well as any decisions and recommendations (including those arising from a day of general discussion) and general comments adopted. The full text of those documents can be found at www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx.

C. Membership and officers of the Committee

5. From the sixtieth to the sixty-second session, the Committee maintained the same members and officers noted in its previous report to the General Assembly.[2]

6. In accordance with article 43 of the Convention, the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention was convened on 18 December 2012 at United Nations Headquarters. The following nine members of the Committee were elected or re-elected for

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 41* (A/67/41).

[2] Ibid., annex I.

a term of four years beginning on 1 March 2013: Ms. Amal Aldoseri, Mr. Peter Gurán, Ms. Olga Khazova, Mr. Benyam Mezmur, Ms. Yasmeen Muhamad Shariff, Mr. Wanderlino Nogueira Neto, Ms. Sara Oviedo Fierro, Ms. Maria Rita Parsi and Ms. Renate Winter.

7. Ms. Agnes Akosua Aidoo tended her resignation on 31 October 2013. As at 31 January 2014, the Government of Ghana had not yet nominated a replacement in accordance with article 43, paragraph 7, of the Convention. The list of the members of the Committee, with an indication of their term of office, appears in annex I to the present report. Annex I also indicates the officers elected at the sixty-third session of the Committee.

D. Adoption of the report

8. At its 1875th meeting, held on 31 January 2014, the Committee considered the draft of its twelfth biennial report to the General Assembly, covering its activities from the sixtieth to the sixty-fifth session. The report was adopted unanimously by the Committee.

II. Reports by States parties under article 44 of the Convention, article 8 of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and article 12 of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

A. Submission of reports

9. In order to maintain an up-to-date register of the status of submission of reports and the adoption of related concluding observations, prior to each session the Committee issues a comprehensive document outlining the number of reports submitted to date. That document, entitled "States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols and related status of submission of reports", also contains relevant information on the exceptional measures taken to address late or non-reporting States parties. The latest version of that report (CRC/C/65/2) was issued on 18 November 2013, prior to the sixty-fifth session of the Committee.

10. As at 15 November 2013, the Committee had received 605 reports pursuant to article 44 of the Convention, including 197 initial, 157 second periodic, 120 third periodic, 107 fourth periodic and 24 fifth periodic reports, as well as 100 initial State party reports and 1 second periodic report under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and 85 initial reports and 1 second periodic report under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. As at 31 January 2014, the last day of the sixty-fifth session, the backlog of reports to be considered by the Committee stood at 95 reports: 61 under the Convention, 18 under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and 16 under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. For the full lists of the reports, see CRC/C/65/2, annexes I, II and III.

B. Consideration of reports

11. At its sixtieth to sixty-fifth sessions, the Committee considered 36 initial and periodic reports under the Convention, 14 initial reports under the Optional Protocol on the

involvement of children in armed conflict and 16 initial reports under the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. At its sixty-second and sixty-fourth sessions, respectively, the Committee considered two States parties, Niue and Tuvalu, that participated via videoconference from the office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Fiji.

12. The following table indicates, by session, the reports of States parties considered by the Committee during the period covered by the present report, including their respective document symbols. It further provides the document symbol of the concluding observations.

	State party report	*Concluding observations*
Sixtieth session, 29 May–15 June 2012		
Convention on the Rights of the Child		
Algeria	CRC/C/DZA/3-4	CRC/C/DZA/CO/3-4
Australia	CRC/C/AUS/4	CRC/C/AUS/CO/4
Cyprus	CRC/C/CYP/3-4	CRC/C/CYP/CO/3-4
Greece	CRC/C/GRC/2-3	CRC/C/GRC/CO/2-3
Turkey	CRC/C/TUR/2-3	CRC/C/TUR/CO/2-3
Viet Nam	CRC/C/VNM/3-4	CRC/C/VNM/CO/3-4
Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict		
Australia	CRC/C/OPAC/AUS/1	CRC/C/OPAC/AUS/CO/1
Greece	CRC/C/OPAC/GRC/1	CRC/C/OPAC/GRC/CO/1
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography		
Australia	CRC/C/OPSC/AUS/1	CRC/C/OPSC/AUS/CO/1 and Corr.1
Greece	CRC/C/OPSC/GRC/1	CRC/C/OPSC/GRC/CO/1
Nepal	CRC/C/OPSC/NPL/1	CRC/C/OPSC/NPL/CO/1
Sixty-first session, 17 September–5 October 2012		
Convention on the Rights of the Child		
Albania	CRC/C/ALB/2-4	CRC/C/ALB/CO/2-4
Andorra	CRC/C/AND/2	CRC/C/AND/CO/2
Austria	CRC/C/AUT/3-4	CRC/C/AUT/CO/3-4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	CRC/C/BIH/2-4	CRC/C/BIH/CO/2-4
Canada	CRC/C/CAN/3-4	CRC/C/CAN/CO/3-4
Liberia	CRC/C/LBR/2-4	CRC/C/LBR/CO/2-4
Namibia	CRC/C/NAM/2-3	CRC/C/NAM/CO/2-3

	State party report	*Concluding observations*
Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict		
Albania	CRC/C/OPAC/ALB/1	CRC/C/OPAC/ALB/CO/1
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography		
Albania	CRC/C/OPSC/ALB/1	CRC/C/OPSC/ALB/CO/1
Canada	CRC/C/OPSC/CAN/1	CRC/C/OPSC/CAN/CO/1 and Corr.1
Sixty-second session, 14 January–1 February 2013		
Convention on the Rights of the Child		
Guinea	CRC/C/GIN/2	CRC/C/GIN/CO/2
Guyana	CRC/C/GUY/2-4	CRC/C/GUY/CO/2-4
Malta	CRC/C/MLT/2	CRC/C/MLT/CO/2
Niue	CRC/C/NIU/1	CRC/C/NIU/CO/1
Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict		
Burkina Faso	CRC/C/OPAC/BFA/1	CRC/C/OPAC/BFA/CO/1
Slovakia	CRC/C/OPAC/SVK/1	CRC/C/OPAC/SVK/CO/1
United States of America	CRC/C/OPAC/USA/2	CRC/C/OPAC/USA/CO/2
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography		
Burkina Faso	CRC/C/OPSC/BFA/1	CRC/C/OPSC/BFA/CO/1
Philippines	CRC/C/OPSC/PHL/1	CRC/C/OPSC/PHL/CO/1
Slovakia	CRC/C/OPSC/SVK/1	CRC/C/OPSC/SVK/CO/1
United States of America	CRC/C/OPSC/USA/2	CRC/C/OPSC/USA/CO/2
Sixty-third session, 27 May–14 June 2013		
Convention on the Rights of the Child		
Armenia	CRC/C/ARM/3-4	CRC/C/ARM/CO/3-4
Guinea-Bissau	CRC/C/GNB/2-4	CRC/C/GNB/CO/2-4
Israel	CRC/C/ISR/2-4	CRC/C/ISR/CO/2-4
Rwanda	CRC/C/RWA/3-4	CRC/C/RWA/CO/3-4
Slovenia	CRC/C/SVN/3-4	CRC/C/SVN/CO/3-4
Uzbekistan	CRC/C/UZB/3-4	CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4

	State party report	*Concluding observations*
Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict		
Armenia	CRC/C/OPAC/ARM/1	CRC/C/OPAC/ARM/CO/1
Rwanda	CRC/C/OPAC/RWA/1	CRC/C/OPAC/RWA/CO/1
Uzbekistan	CRC/C/OPAC/UZB/1	CRC/C/OPAC/UZB/CO/1
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography		
Armenia	CRC/C/OPSC/ARM/1	CRC/C/OPSC/ARM/CO/1
Rwanda	CRC/C/OPSC/RWA/1	CRC/C/OPSC/RWA/CO/1
Uzbekistan	CRC/C/OPSC/UZB/1	CRC/C/OPSC/UZB/CO/1
Sixty-fourth session, 16 September–4 October 2013		
Convention on the Rights of the Child		
China	CRC/C/CHN/3-4 and Corr.1 CRC/C/CHN-HKG/2 CRC/C/CHN-MAC/1	CRC/C/CHN/CO/3-4
Kuwait	CRC/C/KWT/2	CRC/C/KWT/CO/2
Lithuania	CRC/C/LTU/3-4	CRC/C/LTU/CO/3-4
Luxembourg	CRC/C/LUX/3-4	CRC/C/LUX/CO/3-4
Monaco	CRC/C/MCO/2-3	CRC/C/MCO/CO/2-3
Sao Tome and Principe	CRC/C/STP/2-4	CRC/C/STP/CO/2-4
Tuvalu	CRC/C/TUV/1	CRC/C/TUV/CO/1
Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict		
China	CRC/C/OPAC/CHN/1 and Corr.1	CRC/C/OPAC/CHN/CO/1
Paraguay	CRC/C/OPAC/PRY/1	CRC/C/OPAC/PRY/CO/1
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography		
Paraguay	CRC/C/OPSC/PRY/1	CRC/C/OPSC/PRY/CO/1
Republic of Moldova	CRC/C/OPSC/MDA/1	CRC/C/OPSC/MDA/CO/1
Sixty-fifth session, 13–31 January 2014		
Convention on the Rights of the Child		
Congo	CRC/C/COG/2-4	CRC/C/COG/CO/2-4
Germany	CRC/C/DEU/3-4	CRC/C/DEU/CO/3-4
Holy See	CRC/C/VAT/2	CRC/C/VAT/CO/2
Portugal	CRC/C/PRT/3-4	CRC/C/PRT/CO/3-4

	State party report	*Concluding observations*
Russian Federation	CRC/C/RUS/4-5	CRC/C/RUS/CO/4-5
Yemen	CRC/C/YEM/4	CRC/C/YEM/CO/4
Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict		
Russian Federation	CRC/C/OPAC/RUS/1	CRC/C/OPAC/RUS/CO/1
Yemen	CRC/C/OPAC/YEM/1	CRC/C/OPAC/YEM/CO/1
Holy See	CRC/C/OPAC/VAT/1	CRC/C/OPAC/VAT/CO/1
Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography		
Germany	CRC/C/OPSC/DEU/1	CRC/C/OPSC/DEU/CO/1
Holy See	CRC/C/OPSC/VAT/1	CRC/C/OPSC/VAT/CO/1

13. The Government of Uzbekistan sent its comments on the concluding observations (CRC/C/UZB/CO/3-4, CRC/C/OPAC/UZB/CO/1 and CRC/C/OPSC/UZB/CO/1) on 27 September 2013. Those comments can be found on the webpage of the sixty-third session (http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=UZB&Lang=EN). The Government of China sent its comments on the concluding observations (CRC/C/CHN/CO/3-4) on 17 January 2014. They are available on the webpage of the sixty-fourth session (http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=CHN&Lang=EN).

C. Progress achieved: trends and challenges of the implementation process

14. In line with its practice regarding its biennial reports, in the present section the Committee assesses achievements and challenges as well as current trends in child rights. In particular, the Committee dedicates a subsection to child participation in the work of the Committee.

1. Progress achieved in general

15. During the period under review, the Committee on the Rights of the Child considered at six sessions a total of 66 reports under the Convention and the first two Optional Protocols. In addition, it issued the four general comments listed in paragraph 37 below.

16. During the sessions, the Committee also held a number of weekend retreats in order to work on certain topics. In June 2012, it held a retreat in Sion to discuss its working methods, in particular the format of its concluding observations, with the support of the International Institute for the Rights of the Child. On 2 February 2013, the Committee held a retreat in Saillon, Switzerland, funded by the Government of Qatar, to discuss general comments. On 21 and 22 September 2013, the Committee held a retreat on child participation in Morges, Switzerland, with the support of the government of Norway. On 25 and 26 January 2014, it held a retreat in Annecy, France, to discuss accountability and indicators, with the support of the Government of Bahrain.

17. Between sessions, the Committee members were personally engaged in numerous activities. Those included participating in several meetings, conferences, seminars, lectures and courses. Additionally, many Committee members were involved in the follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee in a number of countries upon invitation from

States, civil society organizations and UNICEF. That work remains indispensable to guarantee a better application of the Convention and its three Optional Protocols.

18. The Committee continued its work on the process initiated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2009 on strengthening the treaty body system. At its sixty-third session, on 12 June 2013, the Committee held a videoconference with the Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations and the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations in their capacity as co-facilitators of the treaty body strengthening process.

2. Child participation in the work of the Committee

19. The right of all children to be heard and taken seriously constitutes one of the fundamental rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Children. It is the right of every child without any discrimination. At the international level, the involvement of children in the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child has particular relevance, including in the monitoring of children's rights implementation by States parties. The Committee has consistently highlighted that due consideration of children's views, in accordance with article 12, must be an integral part of all its functions.

20. In recent years, children have become increasingly involved in the work of the Committee, including in its reporting process, consultations for general comments, days of general discussion and events such as those marking the anniversaries of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Under the new Optional Protocol, following its entry into force on 14 April 2014, children will be involved in presenting communications. Recognizing the role played by children and in order to strengthen their participation, the Committee, at its sixty-third session, decided to develop working methods for the participation of children in its work.

21. In September 2013, in the context of its sixty-fourth session, the Committee, in collaboration with Child Rights Connect, held a weekend retreat on child participation in Morges, Switzerland, funded by the Government of Norway. The event had two main objectives: (a) to stimulate discussion within the Committee on how best to engage with children and to hear and incorporate children's views in its different areas of work; and (b) to establish a framework for children's participation in the work of the Committee to ensure that children can access the Committee and communicate their views on various themes. A plan of action has been formulated to follow up on the retreat and a number of priority areas were agreed, namely, the adoption of working methods for children's participation, the identification of child-friendly versions of the Convention, the development of a child-friendly version of the Committee's website and increased coordination with child-led organizations at the local level.

22. The main purposes of the draft working methods are: (a) to define, facilitate and promote meaningful participation and representation of children in the work of the Committee, including in its monitoring functions; and (b) to provide children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations, with guidance and a framework for interacting with the Committee, primarily with respect to expressing their own views on the situation of children's rights in their countries and the progress made and challenges faced by their States in implementing the Convention and its Optional Protocols. The draft is based on the Committee's general comment No. 12 (2009) on the right of the child to be heard as well as on its own working methods and rules of procedure. It draws from the experience of the Committee in reviewing children's submissions and attending children's meetings during the sessions and pre-sessional working groups, as well as in interacting with children during its day of general discussion on the right of the child to be heard in 2006 and during the event held to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2010.

23. The working methods set the framework for children's participation, specifically during: (a) the reporting process of the Committee, (b) days of general discussion, (c) the elaboration of the general comments of the Committee and (d) other events of the Committee. They also envisage the use of technology, such as videoconferencing and social media, to facilitate access to the Committee for all children regardless of their physical location, socioeconomic situation or other conditions. Technology to strengthen child participation will be used for future events, such as the day of general discussion on "Digital media and children's rights", which will be held in Geneva on 12 September 2014, and for events around the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention, to connect children from various countries through social media, including blogs and microblogs (for example, Twitter), social networking sites, YouTube and Instagram.

24. The Committee is planning to adopt the working methods for the participation of children in the work of the Committee at its sixty-sixth session.

3. Trends and challenges

25. The Committee has observed that many States parties demonstrate an eagerness to implement the Convention and make strong efforts in that regard. There have been improvements in many areas of children's rights around the world, for instance an increase in legislation and policies related to children's rights; more children going to school, especially girls; and more widespread use of restorative justice and alternative dispute resolution. However, there are challenges as well, and the Committee would like to highlight a few of those.

26. Every day millions of children suffer from negligence, violence, abuse and exploitation at home, at school, in institutions and in the community. The Committee has also observed with concern the growth in the sale and trading of children for the purposes of sale of organs, pornography and prostitution, as well as for adoption or labour. The Internet has led to an increase in such crime. The recruitment, use and abuse of children in armed conflict further darken this picture of the sad and difficult situations in which many children in the world must live. Children who live in poverty, who do not have a family, who live in the street or who are members of ethnic minorities have an additional risk to fall victims of violence and exploitation. Fighting violence against children is complicated because of the social and cultural tolerance of several forms of violence, including a high prevalence of harmful practices, especially against girls, and exploitation in many communities. Most countries still do not cover all such crimes in their legislation and do not criminalize domestic violence against children. In addition, corruption and impunity make it difficult to punish the persons responsible for those crimes. Without freedom from violence, children's development cannot be fully achieved. Therefore, the Committee recommends that States take measures at the national level and enhance coordination at the regional and international levels aimed at combating all violence against children, with a focus on changing attitudes, implementing other forms of prevention and bringing the responsible persons to justice. It recommends that States invest in special protection programmes and strengthen the child protection systems. All States should be held accountable for their work in that respect.

27. The rights of children with disabilities are violated all over the world. Stigmatization of those children is widespread and often strong, leading to discrimination. In many countries they are institutionalized without proper reason, both due to the stigma and because a lack of social, psychological, medical and educational assistance for their families makes it very hard for their parents to take care of them at home. In the education system children with disabilities, more often than not, are segregated into special schools. The Committee asks of States that they carry out awareness-raising activities to combat the stigma against children with disabilities and that they provide families with the necessary

services to enable them to keep their children at home. In education, the inclusion of all children should be the overarching idea, meaning that States must provide ordinary schools with a sufficient number of appropriately trained personnel to give children with disabilities quality education, the assistance they need and reasonable accommodation.

28. As a result of increased migration following from the globalization processes, children face various problems connected with moving to other countries or regions, whether they are alone or with their families, and whether they move voluntarily or by force. Children left behind when their parents migrate, for example to find work, are also in a vulnerable situation. Migration concerns countries of origin, transit or destination, that is, almost all countries in the world, irrespective of their geographical location and level of economic development. Children in migration situations experience many violations of their rights under the Convention: they may be neglected and discriminated against; they may be separated from their parents and siblings without any objective necessity; they are often deprived of access to education and health services available to other children in the State or region; and they are more vulnerable to violence and various forms of child abuse. It is not easy for States parties to deal with those problems, but the Committee expects them to respond to the challenge and take all necessary measures in order to prevent discrimination against migrant children and ensure all their rights under the Convention. States parties can also refer to the report on the day of general discussion dedicated to the rights of all children in the context of international migration held by the Committee in September 2012.[3]

29. In the context of juvenile justice the Committee notes with concern that there is a growing tendency worldwide to lower the age of criminal responsibility, to respond to crimes committed by children with increasingly harsher punishments, and to reduce social services and necessary support for children and families, especially affecting families with several children. The Committee notes as well the scarce use in the juvenile justice system of specialized professionals who work with children in conflict or contact with the law. That runs counter to the need for a better understanding of youth criminality and to finding a better response to the problems children have in that regard. Direct access for children to the Committee through the individual complaints mechanism under the third Optional Protocol might be helpful in the long run.

30. The right to play is enshrined in article 31 of the Convention. Indeed, play is a crucial activity for the physical and mental development of all children, including those who are in a vulnerable situation. It allows the child to acknowledge the family and social environment, but also to discover the urban or rural world. The right to play is complementary of the right to education because it facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, and of the right to life, survival and development because it contributes in shaping the child's character. However, the right to play is subject to several types of violations. For many children, the time which should be saved for playing is devoted to carrying out domestic, agricultural or industrial work. The physical space for playing is another limitation, as playgrounds, either in public areas or in the family house, are inappropriate because of lack of awareness or insufficient resources on the part of local authorities and parents. The right to play also competes with the right to enjoy a quiet and peaceful environment claimed by adults. Nevertheless, the right to play has to be safeguarded in the best interest of the child.

31. Furthermore, the Committee is deeply concerned that millions of children are caught in armed conflict around the world, such as in the Syrian Arab Republic, and are victims of

[3] Available from http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRC/Discussions/2012/DGD2012ReportAndRecommendations.pdf.

grave violations. Indiscriminate attacks on schools and residential areas lead to the deaths and injuries of great numbers of children, thus violating their right to life, security, health and education. Many are subjected to sexual violence and recruitment as child soldiers by both government forces and armed opposition groups. The right of children to a home and family life is violated on a large scale when thousands of families must flee their country. In the refugee camps, children almost invariably continue to experience violations of their rights, including the right to education. The main responsibility for such violations rests with the parties to the conflict, but the international community also has a responsibility to ensure that children's rights are protected and fulfilled and that perpetrators of such violations are held accountable.

III. Overview of the other activities of the Committee

A. Methods of work

1. Request to hold one session each year in parallel chambers

32. On 11 February 2011, in order to address the persisting backlog and to encourage timely reporting, the Committee adopted its decision No. 10, in which it decided to request the General Assembly to approve the holding of one of the Committee's three annual sessions in two chambers every year. On 20 December 2012, the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/167, in which it authorized the Committee to meet in parallel chambers for one pre-sessional meeting in 2014, which amounts to 5 additional working days, and for one regular session in 2015, which amounts to 13 additional working days.

33. The sixty-eighth pre-sessional working group (16 to 20 June 2014) will thus be held in parallel chambers, as will the sixty-eighth session (January 2015).

2. New reporting guidelines and rules of procedure

34. At its sixty-second session, the Committee discussed and adopted its revised rules of procedure (CRC/C/4/Rev.3) in order to incorporate the Guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies (the Addis Ababa guidelines), which were endorsed by the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies on 29 June 2012, at their twenty-fourth meeting.

35. At the same session, the Committee also adopted the rules of procedure for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (CRC/C/62/3).

36. At its sixty-fifth session, the Committee revised the treaty specific reporting guidelines (CRC/C/58/Rev.2 and Corr.1) in order to add a new thematic cluster on violence against children.

3. General comments

37. At its sixty-second session, the Committee adopted the following general comments:

- General comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (art. 3, para. 1);
- General comment No. 15 (2013) on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (art. 24);
- General comment No. 16 (2013) on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights;

- General comment No. 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural rights and the arts (art. 31).

38. In addition, the Committee is continuing its work on the draft joint general comment on harmful practices, which it is developing with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

39. At its sixty-fifth session, the Committee decided to embark on the drafting of two new general comments: one on public spending to realize children's rights and one on adolescents.

4. Press releases

40. During the reporting period, the Committee issued 9 press releases. Press releases were issued to mark the Universal Day of the Child (20 November) and the International Day of the Girl Child (11 October). The Committee issued a press release on the tenth ratification of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure and on the judgement by the Appeals Chamber of the Special Court for Sierra Leone to uphold the conviction of the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor. Other press releases focused on specific situations related to children's rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Gaza. All press releases issued by the Committee are available from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/newssearch.aspx?MID=Committ_Rights_Child.

5. Introduction meeting for new members

41. On 24 May 2013, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights held an orientation meeting for the eight newly elected members. Two current members and one former member of the Committee contributed to the orientation programme.

B. International cooperation and solidarity for the implementation of the Convention

1. Cooperation with United Nations and other competent bodies

42. During the period covered by the present report, the Committee pursued its active cooperation with United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and other competent bodies.

43. The Committee held meetings with the United Nations agencies and bodies and other competent bodies and representatives listed below:

(a) United Nations agencies and bodies:

- UNICEF: On 7 October 2013, the Committee held its fourth biennial meeting with UNICEF, which included representatives from UNICEF Headquarters, as well as Regional and Deputy Regional Directors, to seek ways to enhance the existing cooperation between the Committee and UNICEF (sixty-fourth session);
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: The Committee met with representatives from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to discuss best interests determination and statelessness (sixtieth session);
- World Health Organization: Representatives of the World Health Organization delivered a presentation on the revised edition of the

organization's *Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems* publication (sixty-fifth session);

(b) Others:

- Executive Committee of Child Rights Connect (formerly the NGO Group for the CRC) (sixtieth, sixty-second, sixty-third and sixty-fifth sessions);
- Terre des Hommes, for a briefing on environmental rights (sixtieth session);
- Child and Youth Finance International, for a meeting (sixty-first session);
- Child Soldiers International, for a presentation of the agenda for action to end State use of child soldiers (sixty-first session);
- The Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University, for a briefing on the Model Law on Child Protection (sixty-second session);
- Global Reference Group on Accountability to Children's Rights, for a briefing (sixty-second session);
- The Director of Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, for a meeting (sixty-second session);
- The Chair and the Secretary of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (sixty-third session);
- International Social Service, for a presentation on the implementation handbook for the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (sixty-third session);
- Human Rights Watch, for a presentation on a report on the issue of the military use of schools and other education institutions during conflict (sixty-third session);
- International Detention Coalition, for a presentation on research relating to child immigration detention (sixty-third session);
- World Child and Youth Forum (sixty-third session);
- Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice (sixty-third session);
- Jody Heymann of the World Policy Analysis Center, for a presentation on global data on children (sixty-fourth session);
- Inter-Agency Group on Children on the Move (sixty-fourth session);
- International Play Association, for a celebration lunch and launch of the Committee's general comment No. 17 (sixty-fourth session);
- Plan International, for a presentation on a study on disaster risk management and climate change in child rights monitoring (sixty-fourth session);
- DotKids Foundation (sixty-fourth session);
- Representatives from Child Soldiers International, for a briefing on issues relating to the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (sixty-fourth session);
- Child Rights Information Network (sixty-fifth session);
- Defence for Children International, for a presentation on the global study on children deprived of liberty (sixty-fifth session);

- Save the Children and other partners, to discuss a possible general comment on public spending to realize children's rights (sixty-fifth session);
- International Baby Food Action Network and UNICEF, for a briefing on breastfeeding (sixty-fifth session);
- Marc Dullaert and Karin Arts, for a presentation of the KidsRights Index (sixty-fifth session);
- The Chair and the Executive Director of ECPAT and a representative from the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), for a presentation on the growth of child sexual abuse and exploitation online (sixty-fifth session).

44. With respect to cooperation with other United Nations human rights mechanisms and special procedures, the Committee also held meetings with the following experts:

- Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter (sixtieth session);
- Members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, to discuss the joint general comment on harmful practices (sixty-second and sixty-fifth sessions).

2. Participation in United Nations and other relevant meetings

45. In 2012, the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr. Zermatten, participated in the twenty-fourth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies in Addis Ababa. In 2013, Mr. Kotrane, a vice-chairperson of the Committee, represented the Committee at the twenty-fifth meeting of chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies, which took place in New York.

46. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure was opened for signature on 28 February 2012 with an official ceremony in Geneva. Twenty States signed the Optional Protocol that day. The Chairperson of the Committee, Mr. Zermatten, sent a video message.

47. Members of the Committee participated in a variety of meetings at the international, regional and national levels where issues relevant to the rights of the child were raised.

3. Other related activities

48. In accordance with the provisions of article 45 (c) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, under which the Committee may make recommendations to the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to undertake on its behalf studies on specific issues relating to the rights of the child, the Committee decided to recommend that the Secretary-General be requested, through the General Assembly, to conduct an in-depth international study on children deprived of their liberty (for the full text of the recommendation, see annex II to the present report).

49. In that regard, the Chairperson will send a letter to the Secretary-General to be circulated as a document of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

C. General thematic discussions

50. In accordance with rule 79 of its rules of procedure, the Committee holds an annual day of general discussion on the second Friday of its September session. On 28 September 2012, at the sixty-first session of the Committee, the thematic discussion was dedicated to the rights of all children in the context of international migration. The day of general

discussion was attended by over 250 participants, including States, civil society actors in the areas of child rights and of migration rights, and child representatives. A summary of the discussions, the list of participants and the set of related recommendations adopted by the Committee at its sixty-second session can be found on the webpage of the Committee (www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Discussion2012.aspx).

51. At its sixty-second session, the Committee decided to hold days of general discussion every two years. Therefore, its next day of general discussion, on "Digital media and children's rights", was postponed to the sixty-seventh session and will be held on 12 September 2014 at the Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Annexes

Annex I

Membership of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Name of member	*Country of nationality*
Ms. Agnes Akosua **Aidoo***	Ghana
Ms. Amal **Aldoseri****	Bahrain
Ms. Aseil **Al-Shehail***	Saudi Arabia
Mr. Jorge Cardona **Llorens***	Spain
Mr. Bernard **Gastaud***	Monaco
Mr. Peter **Gurán****	Slovakia
Ms. Maria **Herczog***	Hungary
Ms. Olga A. **Khazova****	Russian Federation
Mr. Hatem **Kotrane***	Tunisia
Mr. Gehad **Madi***	Egypt
Mr. Benyam **Mezmur****	Ethiopia
Ms. Yasmeen **Muhamad Shariff****	Malaysia
Mr. Wanderlino **Nogueira Neto****	Brazil
Ms. Sara **Oviedo Fierro****	Ecuador
Ms. Kirsten **Sandberg***	Norway
Ms. Maria Rita **Parsi****	Italy
Ms. Hiranthi **Wijemanne***	Sri Lanka
Ms. Renate **Winter****	Austria

* Term expires 28 February 2015.
** Term expires 28 February 2017.

Bureau of the Committee on the Rights of the Child 2013–2015

Chairperson	Ms. Sandberg
Vice-Chairperson a.i.***	Ms. Aldoseri
Vice-Chairperson****	Ms. Al-Shehail
Vice-Chairperson	Mr. Mezmur
Vice-Chairperson	Ms. Oviedo Fierro
Vice-Chairperson	Ms. Wijemanne
Rapporteur	Ms. Herczog

*** Sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions.
**** Sixtieth–sixty-third sessions.

Annex II

Recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on an international study on children deprived of their liberty, adopted at its sixty-fifth session

In accordance with the provisions of article 45 (c) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested, through the General Assembly, to conduct an in-depth international study on children deprived of their liberty. The study should be as thorough and influential as the reports of the expert appointed by the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children, Graça Machel, (see A/51/306) and of the independent expert appointed by the Secretary-General on violence against children, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro (see A/61/299).

Such a study should:

(a) Collect data to document the scale of the deprivation, in any form, of the liberty of children;

(b) Assess the situation of children in detention facilities, the implementation of applicable international standards, and the effectiveness of existing approaches;

(c) Identify good practices and steps to be taken at the international level, as well as good practices and steps to be taken at the national level by Member States to meet their international legal obligations, reduce the number of children deprived of their liberty and put in place effective alternatives.